

# NNewsline

## Social Services: Improving Quality of Life for Residents at Neighborhood Networks Centers

Social services at Neighborhood Networks centers can enhance residents' quality of life by building a sense of community, providing recreational opportunities or supporting other center programs. For example, a van service that transports residents to their jobs is a key service that can make job placement efforts successful. A property that suffers from high crime may establish a neighborhood crime watch in conjunction with their local police.

These are key points to consider in developing successful social service programs at a Neighborhood Networks center.

- Perform an initial needs assessment.
- Assess community resources to locate models, expertise and existing services.
- Research what has been done and seek models. The Internet is a great resource.
- Explore funding sources from foundations, businesses, and local, state and federal sources.
- Be willing to start small, if necessary.
- Plan thoroughly. Develop a written plan.
- Think creatively.
- Forge partnerships.
- Involve residents in planning, implementation and operation.
- Be prepared and plan to make adjustments in the program.

For more information about social services at Neighborhood Networks centers, contact the **Neighborhood Networks Information Center** toll-free at 888-312-2743.

### Offering Social Services

*Here are some ways centers provide social services.*

#### **Child Care**

On-site child care is available to residents enrolled in school or job training at the **Pensacola Village and Escambia Arms Neighborhood Networks Centers in Pensacola, FL.** Without transportation to child care, residents would not be able to attend classes.

#### **Community Improvement**

The community garden plots at **Kirkland Union Manor in Portland, OR,** are so popular that there is a waiting list. Resident garden committees manage the plots and raise funds to purchase garden tools.

#### **Transportation**

Residents operate two 15-passenger vans that transport residents to social services and classes at the Family Development Center. To make this possible, six properties have pooled project funds under the **Prichard Comprehensive Neighborhood Networks Center in Prichard, AL.**

#### **Seniors**

Seniors are paired with fifth and sixth grade students in the Key pals project, a partnership between the Memphis Educational Computer Connectivity Alliance (MECCA), Grahamwood Elementary School and **St. Peter Manor Computer Learning Center in Memphis, TN.** Seniors who have learned to design web pages pass their knowledge on to school children who develop their own personal web pages.

For more information, contact **Debby Volk of Neighborhood Networks** at 888-312-2743.

### NNewsline

Welcome to NNewsline. Each issue of NNewsline focuses on a topic relevant to Neighborhood Networks. The theme of this issue of NNewsline is Social Services.



Neighborhood Networks

U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development

Office of Housing-Multifamily

[www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org)



## Transportation Resource for Centers

The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting community-based transportation initiatives by providing information, technical assistance, advocacy and research. Among CTAA's resources of interest to Neighborhood Networks centers are:

- The National Transit Resource Center, a clearinghouse for publications on funding sources, welfare-to-work transit initiatives and nuts-and-bolts written guidance on how to operate a transportation service.
- Technical assistance through CTAA's national network of transit providers.
- *Community Transportation*, CTAA's bi-monthly magazine, features best practices and in-depth discussions of transportation issues.
- The online Transit Forum, where users post transportation questions and have them answered by other Transit Forum visitors.

For more information, explore CTAA's website at [www.ctaa.org](http://www.ctaa.org) or call 202-628-1480.

## KIDS' CORNER: The ThinkQuest Contest

Neighborhood Networks is participating in ThinkQuest, an international contest for teenagers designing educational websites. Winners receive scholarships and their centers receive cash awards.

The first Neighborhood Networks-ThinkQuest projects are at **Packer Community Learning Center** in **Madison, WI**, where one team is developing a website on asthma in teenagers and another is preparing a website linking contemporary music themes with the work of poets for whom their neighborhood streets are named. Also, students at the **Crescent Park Multi-Cultural Family Resource Center** in **Richmond, CA**, are planning a website on fashion design and modeling.

For more information, visit the ThinkQuest website at [www.thinkquest.org](http://www.thinkquest.org) or e-mail **Vivian Guilfooy of Neighborhood Networks** at [vguilfooy@edc.org](mailto:vguilfooy@edc.org)

## Partnership News

### A Growing Idea - Community Gardening Partners



Beautification and a strengthened sense of community are the obvious benefits of community gardens. But, a community garden can also provide inexpensive produce, jobs and income to residents. In addition, community gardens can be educational and serve as a classroom for students.

Here are some ways Neighborhood Networks centers can work with community gardening partners:

- A local government agency donates the garden site.
- A local hardware store contributes topsoil, seeds, tools and fencing.
- Existing gardening groups in the community provide technical assistance.

*How do I develop community gardening partnerships?*

The first step is to think about the goals of the community garden and determine who will benefit from it. Will it be for residents only or the entire community? Then, talk to potential gardening partners about the garden's benefits and how you can work together. Reach out to other local community gardening projects for ideas or advice.

Finally, visit the American Community Gardening Association's website at [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org) for information and resources.

For more information, contact **Barbara Floyd-Jones of Neighborhood Networks** at 888-312-2743.

## A Head Start

There are many opportunities for Neighborhood Networks centers to partner with local Head Start programs.

The key components of the Head Start program are education, health and social services for low-income preschool children ages three to five and their families. Head Start is administered by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. However, programs and services are delivered on the local level.

Head Start grantees must be either public or private nonprofit organizations or public school systems. Twenty percent of the total cost of a Head Start program must be contributed by the community. Neighborhood Networks centers can partner with Head Start programs by providing valuable space and services, and in doing so, bring Head Start services directly to their community and residents.

For more information and to find a Head Start grantee serving your community, visit the Head Start website at [www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/index.htm](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/index.htm)



# ***NNewsline Close Up:*** **Golden Years, Golden Opportunities -** **The World Wide Web Expands Life Beyond** **Neighborhood Networks Centers**

## **The International Year of Older Persons**

The United Nations (UN) has designated 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons. It is a year that celebrates the importance and contributions of older people in today's society. The theme—towards a society for all ages—emphasizes greater integration between the young and the old to build stronger understanding for the future.

Neighborhood Networks centers can join in the 1999 International Year of Older Persons celebration by conducting some of the UN's suggested activities for local participation. For example, centers can establish senior advisory groups to identify and address the needs of older persons. Neighborhood Networks centers can also create and maintain a directory of seniors organized according to their talent and expertise to match them with paid and unpaid opportunities within the center and community.

For more information, visit the UN's International Year of Older Persons web page at [www.un.org/esa/socdev/iyp](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/iyp)

Benjamin Jacksch has become so comfortable using a computer that he now has his own personal computer, although he still uses the one at the **St. Marks Garden Neighborhood Networks Center** in **Kaysville, Utah**, which serves the property where the 66-year-old lives.

Recently, Jacksch turned to the Internet when he was faced with a health problem. "I was facing surgery in December and I was concerned about the procedures and options," he said. So, he located the Mayo Clinic's website. "It gave me a lot of information and it eased my mind."

In the six months since Jacksch has been using a computer, most of his research has been health-related, he said. Jacksch is not alone. Access to health information via the World Wide Web is becoming increasingly popular among one of the most resistant groups of computer users—senior citizens.

Seniors are the primary population at more than a quarter of HUD-assisted and/or

-insured properties with Neighborhood Networks centers. More and more, they are using computers, whether it's in search of health information or an opportunity to practice skills that could land them a job. But initial reluctance can be an obstacle.

"I will admit that seniors are the hardest people to get on the computer, but once they're accustomed to it, they're the hardest to get off," said Kim Thibodeau, the coordinator at several Neighborhood Networks centers in rural Maine.

Center coordinators share how residents are using computers:

- At **St. Marks Garden** in **Kaysville, Utah**, residents find health information and chat rooms. The chat rooms serve as online support groups.
- At centers operated by **The Housing Foundation** in **Newburgh, ME**, residents use the computer to communicate with their property manager.
- At **St. Justin Plaza** in **Pittsburgh, PA**, residents developed a web page featuring health information, including nutrition and exercise.
- At **Carmel Manor Apartments** in **Vicksburg, MS**, residents seeking prescription information bring their medication containers to the center so they have the correct spelling of their medication when they do their Internet research.

For more information on senior services at Neighborhood Networks centers, **contact Debby Volk at 888-312-2743.**



*Gwen McEvay is among a number of people at St. Marks Garden Neighborhood Networks Center using the Internet.*

## ***HUD Neighborhood Networks NNewsline***

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# Neighborhood Networks News



There are more than 490 Neighborhood Networks centers located in HUD-assisted and/or -insured housing nationwide. Among the newest centers to open are:

Aqua Vista Apartments  
Newport News, Virginia  
April 1, 1999

Loretta Orme Activity Center of  
Parkway Gardens Apartments  
Chicago, Illinois  
April 9, 1999

Weyerbacher Terrace  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
April 20, 1999

Durango Housing Computer  
Learning Lab  
Durango, Colorado  
May 12, 1999

Cathedral Townhouses  
Jacksonville, Florida  
May 18, 1999

Cathedral Towers  
Jacksonville, Florida  
May 18, 1999

Cathedral Court  
Jacksonville, Florida  
May 18, 1999

Timuquana Park Apartments  
Jacksonville, Florida  
May 22, 1999

## TAKE A VIRTUAL SEAT!! Stop in Online at the Neighborhood Networks Conference

Think you will miss out on this year's exciting Neighborhood Networks conference "Building a Better Tomorrow," if you are not in Kansas City, MO, July 20-24?

Don't fret. Travel the information highway throughout the four-day national conference and become a virtual participant — virtually!

Just visit the Neighborhood Networks website every day at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org) to find conference summaries and photographs. Other resources, like fact sheets and "how-to" guides on employment, microenterprise development, education, health, child care and transportation are already posted at the website. Speaker presentations and related resources will be posted on the Neighborhood Networks website as soon after the conference as possible. So, check the website regularly or call the **Neighborhood Networks Information Center toll free at 888-312-2743.**

**This will be the next best thing to being there!**

**Visit our website at [www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org](http://www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org)**

## U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Neighborhood Networks

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